

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE PAUL D. RYAN
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
March 6, 2013

Thank you, Chairman Miller and Congressman Brady, for the opportunity to testify concerning the Budget Committee's funding request for 2013.

The Budget Committee has requested a flat budget for the past 8 years and we have kept spending within the levels approved by this Committee. I have worked to maintain the disciplined approach to our budget that is a bipartisan tradition of the Budget Committee. For example, Chairman Spratt operated the committee well within its authorized level. I am determined to continue this prudent stewardship of our budget going forward.

Last year was an extraordinary year with large demands on the committee's resources. In addition to committee approval and House passage of the fiscal year 2013 budget resolution, we approved and passed through the House several budget process reform measures, including the bipartisan Expedited Line-Item Veto and Rescissions Act which was sponsored by Mr. Van Hollen and me. We also reported and moved through the House the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act that would have replaced the impending automatic spending cuts with other spending reforms. We also, on a bipartisan basis, reported and passed through the House the Sequestration Transparency Act which the President signed into law in August. This legislation gave us important advance information about the sequester. Our work was also devoted to the fiscal cliff, debt ceiling, the sequester, and the continuing resolution.

As you examine the Budget Committee's actual expenditures from last year, I ask that you keep in mind that they were unusually low due to special one-time factors. As you know, in addition to running for Congress, I pursued another office last year. In addition, five members of my Budget Committee staff requested and were granted leave without pay from the Committee in accordance with House rules. Due to uncertainty associated with these factors, two existing vacancies for senior staff positions on my Budget Committee staff were not filled.

We at the Budget Committee have prided ourselves on living within the funds with which we have been provided. In addition, regardless of which party has been in the Majority, we have always fostered a collegial relationship on the issue of the Committee's budget. We have a bipartisan tradition regarding the allocation of resources between the Majority and Minority. The Majority makes at least one-third of the personnel budget available to the Minority, and this is the largest area of our spending needs. Equipment for both the Majority and Minority then comes out of the common fund, on the same schedule, and with the same quality, for both sides.

This year's budget proposal continues that tradition. I believe our request is a disciplined budget that treats the Minority fairly, and I believe Mr. Van Hollen's testimony supports both our budget request and our plans for the management of committee funds.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Statement of Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Democrat, House Budget Committee
March 6, 2013
11:00 a.m.
1310 Longworth House Office Building

Review of the Use of Committee Funds of the 113th Congress

Thank you, Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Brady, for providing this opportunity to testify about the Budget Committee's use of funds in the 113th Congress.

I am pleased to be testifying alongside Chairman Ryan, demonstrating once again that the Budget Committee has a long-standing and proud tradition of bipartisan cooperation and collegiality in requesting and disbursing the Committee's budget.

In keeping with past policies, in the 113th Congress the majority will make one-third of the funding and resources available to the minority for personnel. The majority budget continues to cover costs of equipment for both staffs, providing the same quality and services for both majority and minority.

The current cut in federal spending under sequestration requires the federal government to continue functioning with less funding. And in fact, the minority Committee staff has already been doing more with less. As my colleague pointed out, in addition to marking up a budget resolution each year, we marked up and brought to the floor several bills making budget process changes, and last year held a reconciliation bill markup and then considered the bill on the floor twice. Our staff also participated in the deficit talks chaired by Vice President Biden and the subsequent debt ceiling issues and the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction in 2011, and in the fiscal cliff negotiations at the end of 2012.

In the last year, our minority staff had some staff retirements and other departures, and we lowered our expenditures significantly by leaving the vacancies for several months. But last year's low annual payroll does not reflect what it will take to for us to operate this year now that we have filled the necessary vacancies. We are very fortunate to have an excellent and productive staff that we want to keep. It's important that they receive fair compensation commensurate with their credentials and hard work. We are competing with organizations in the private sector for those with the specific skills and knowledge of federal budgeting, and if we continue to cut pay, we will inevitably lose some of our best staff.

The Budget Committee has a long history of being frugal with our federal funds. We will continue that trend going forward as we grapple with the challenge of putting the federal budget on a fiscally sustainable path.